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Letter dated 18 May 2006 from the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you a letter addressed to you by the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States regarding a statement issued by the Arab leaders at the summit meeting of the Council of the League of Arab States held in Khartoum, the Sudan from 28 to 29 March 2006 on the question of making the region of the Middle East into a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, above all nuclear weapons. I should be grateful if this letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yahya **Mahmassani**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer

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Annex to the letter dated 18 May 2006 from the Permanent Observer of the League of Arab States to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am pleased to inform you that during the summit meeting of the Council of the League of Arab States held in the Sudan from 28 to 29 March 2006 the Arab leaders considered the regional security situation and the question of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. They issued a statement regarding making the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, above all nuclear weapons, in which they expressed their deep concern over negative developments related to nuclear disarmament and the setbacks encountered by the nuclear non-proliferation regime, in particular the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The Arab leaders also expressed their commitment to and support for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and reaffirmed their complete rejection of the possession of nuclear weapons or any weapons of mass destruction by any State in the region of the Middle East. The statement also affirmed that the best solution for preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the region is a comprehensive approach through adoption by the international community of the Arab initiative that has for years called for making the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, above all nuclear weapons.

Since this issue falls within the concerns of both of our organizations and is in line with many resolutions issued by both the United Nations and the Arab League, I hope that our joint efforts towards making the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, above all nuclear weapons, will continue.

It gives me pleasure to annex the statement of the Summit on an issue of great importance due to its implications for the security and stability of the Middle East. I should be grateful if it could be issued as a document of the United Nations.

I take this opportunity to express my fervent desire for continued cooperation and coordination between our two organizations, and my appreciation for your sincere efforts.

(*Signed*) Amr **Moussa**
Secretary-General of the League of Arab States

Statement on making the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, above all nuclear weapons

The Arab leaders express their deep concern over negative international developments related to nuclear disarmament and the setbacks encountered by the nuclear non-proliferation regime, especially the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which represents an unacceptable retreat from the achievements realized by the two review conferences of 1995 and 2000, especially as concerns the region of the Middle East.

The Arab leaders affirm their commitment to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and their support for it as a cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. They demand that the international community support this Treaty by universalizing it and devote equal attention to putting into effect the three pillars on which the Treaty rests, which are nuclear disarmament, the right of Member States to acquire and develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

They also affirm their complete rejection of the possession of nuclear weapons or any weapons of mass destruction by any State in the region of the Middle East, because of the dangerous consequences this poses to regional and international peace and security and the environment in the region. They remind the international community that all the Arab States without exception willingly acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons prior to 2000 and that security and stability in the Middle East cannot be achieved unless Israel accedes to that Treaty and abides by its provisions like the rest of the States in the region, and places all of its nuclear facilities under the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency. They caution that the prolongation of this situation will lead to increased imbalance in the security and stability of the region, and will moreover plunge the region into an arms race with dire consequences.

Based on the foregoing, the Arab leaders affirm that the best solution for preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the region is to follow a comprehensive regional approach through adoption by the international community of the Arab initiative that has for years called for making the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, above all nuclear weapons. They stress that the continued treatment of the dangers of proliferation of these weapons in the Middle East on a selective State-by-State basis represents a blatant contradiction in international policies on this matter.

They request that the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States continue to pursue this matter and submit a report on the security situation in the Arab world in light of regional and international developments to the next regular session of the Council of the League at the summit level.